

**NORTH CAROLINA
INTERAGENCY
LEADERSHIP
TEAM**



Strategic Plan

2006

Mission:

Develop an interagency leadership plan for North Carolina to balance successfully mobility, natural and cultural resource protection, community values, and economic vitality at the confluence of our missions.

Background:

The quality of life for the citizens of North Carolina, both urban and rural, is heavily dependent on transportation. Highways provide the overwhelming proportion of that transportation. There is consensus among the Interagency Leadership Team that the transportation system should be planned hand-in-hand with economic development and the protection and enhancement of our State's cultural and natural resources.

The Interagency Leadership Team came together because it believes that it is essential, and possible, to develop future transportation projects in a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders and preserves the scenic, historic, natural environment, and community values setting while efficiently meeting the mobility, economic, and safety needs of our citizens.

Team Goals:

The Interagency Leadership Team has identified the top concerns and issues facing transportation, the environment and the economy in North Carolina.

Goal 1 – Develop a shared, comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS)

Goal 2 – Local land use and long-range transportation planning result in projects that meet mobility, economic, and environmental goals

Goal 3 – Improve the Merger 01 Process

Team Agencies:

- NC Department of Transportation (DOT)
- NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
- NC Department of Commerce (DOC)
- NC Department of Cultural Resources (DCR)
- NC Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC)
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

Goal 1: Develop a Shared, Comprehensive GIS Database

Goal Sponsor: Dempsey Benton (DENR)

Background:

North Carolina is a national leader in the use of geographic information technology by state and local government entities. This technology allows agencies to manage disparate databases and combine them within a geographic context to view and more clearly understand the interrelationship of issues. Decision-makers often rely on this technology to create service efficiencies, manage infrastructure, and assist planning efforts. State and federal agencies must share common geographic data for the transportation planning process that needs environmental, cultural resources, and economic development review. To reduce conflicts and avoid costly delays in carrying out their missions, each state and federal agency must consider its actions in relation to the others. Geographic information technology is one tool that provides exceptional detail and encourages this collaborative approach.

Objectives:

1. Create new and update GIS layers as needed.
2. Develop a means to share database layers.
3. Establish a mechanism for maintaining the data.
4. Create a shared analytical platform.

Vision:

1. The GIS system platform is secure, readily accessible, and user-friendly.
2. GIS data layers are relevant and accurate.
3. Resources are available to develop and maintain the system.

Goal 1 - Challenges

Circumstances and forces that either directly or indirectly hinders progress toward the goal.

No existing funding for new data layers.

Many existing data layers do not share the same resolution

No existing funding for a shared analytical platform

Possible problem with adding non-certified sites

Goal 1 - Opportunities

Assets and circumstances that positively influence progress toward the goal.

NCCGIA is developing NC OneMap

Major statewide floodplain mapping is ongoing

Partnering agencies are developing data on a project basis

Developing a map tool

Commerce is developing an Economic Development Intelligence System (EDIS)

Goal 1 - Strategies/Activities

The approaches you will take to achieve your objectives and that build on opportunities and mitigate challenges.

Activity 1:
Inform Secretaries /Agency Heads

Activity 2:
Identify existing resources and partners

Activity 3:
Determine needs and costs of participating agencies

Activity 4:
Develop common reference and data standards

Activity 5:
Develop and submit a coordinated budget to the Governor

Activity 6:
Charge a GIS user team to develop a proposal on priority data needs

Activity 7:
Support data acquisition

Activity 8:
Develop sharing agreements

Activity 9:
Develop the GIS layers for certified sites

Activity 10:
Coordinate with resource groups as to screening criteria

Goal 2:

Local land use and long-range transportation planning result in projects that meet mobility, economic, and environmental goals.

Goal Sponsor: Len Sanderson (DOT)

Background:

Local land use planning can be used to achieve shared economic development and environmental goals when land use plans, transportation plans, and environmental stewardship objectives are integrated and compatible. Generally, land use and transportation planning have not been consistently integrated at the local government level. The result is often that federal, state, and local mandates meet at cross purposes – for example, requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act are not being met through state and local planning processes. The public is demanding greater transparency and more involvement in state and federal agency decision processes. Government agencies at all levels are responding by building better tools, providing technical assistance, and creating cross-disciplinary relationships to accommodate expanded citizen involvement. Recognizing this, state and federal government agencies can take a leadership role in integrating land use planning and long-range mobility planning.

Objectives:

1. Enhance compatibility of land use, economic development, transportation planning, and environmental stewardship.
2. Enhance land use planning to achieve shared economic development and environmental goals.
3. Consider impacts, including secondary and cumulative impacts, starting at the CTP process.

Vision:

1. Transportation systems planning yields viable projects that fulfill a legitimate need and avoid critical resources.
2. Integrated land use and transportation plans facilitate timely transportation program delivery.
3. The transportation systems planning process is performance based.
4. Critical natural, cultural, and human resources are identified and considered in a timely and proactive manner in order to address transportation problems and solutions.
5. Well-defined and mutually understood processes, supported by cutting edge technology, enable successful planning.
6. Clear, measurable, positive environmental goals and criteria are articulated.

Goal 2 - Challenges

Circumstances and forces that either directly or indirectly hinders progress toward the goal.

Status Quo mindset blocks change

Deficiencies in existing funding sources

Deficiency of staff resources; quality and quantity

Lack of sufficient data and data layers

Some existing data and data layers are inaccurate or incomplete

There is insufficient clarity in purpose and need statements

Land-use, economic development, and transportation have not been consistently integrated

Political realities and public expectations not sensitive to the complexity of agency missions and objectives

Lack of definitions and common language

Many competing objectives from politicians, the public, laws, policies, regulations and agency missions

Existing thoroughfare plans that did not include environmental considerations and constraints makes Merger process more complex

Federal and state agencies do not control all aspects of the decision-making process

Goal 2 - Opportunities

Assets and circumstances that positively influence progress toward the goal.

Legislature may be receptive to facilitate recommendations of the Interagency Leadership Team

Division of Community Assistance may be able to facilitate integration of transportation and land use planning

Commit to utilize GIS data as early as possible in transportation systems and project planning

Continued support and Advocacy for NC One Map

There is a demand for greater transparency and more involvement of stakeholders in state and federal agency processes

There is improved long-range transportation systems planning that recognizes land use development plans

There are interagency relations

Development and implementation of CTP Process

Integration of Transportation systems planning and project development processes

Interagency Leadership Team consensus for improvement

Strategic corridor plans provide the opportunity for dialogue among stakeholders

Pieces of state legislation have galvanized support and opposition

RPOs are engaged in land use planning

North Carolina's General Assembly's project delivery study may provide opportunities to discuss significant change

DOT's regionalization of planning and design may help us connect with local governments

DOT's financial situation (cut backs) provides opportunity to have meaningful dialogue about projects and how to use money

Air quality conformity issue can affect how our partners work with us in transportation and land use planning

Implementing the long range statewide transportation plan can affect how our partners work with us

Endangered species can affect how our partners work with us

Involve RPO and MPO in review of certified site process

Goal 2 - Strategies/Activities

The approaches you will take to achieve your objectives and that build on opportunities and mitigate challenges.

Strategy 1: Enhance the capacity and opportunity of staff to participate in planning processes.

- a. **Identify** necessary branches/units within DOT that need to be involved in the planning process
- b. **Improve** participation of DOT's staff in long-range mobility planning, including working with local governments, MPOs and RPOs
- c. **Identify** and educate federal and state resource agencies on appropriate levels of participation in the planning process and engage them in the process

Strategy 2: Develop processes and procedures for involving local, state, and federal government agencies in integrating long-range mobility and economic development planning and land use.

- a. **Review** land development and land use plans to determine how economic development, human, cultural and environmental concerns are being incorporated into the local planning process.
- b. **Develop** and maintain a shared language among agencies and external stakeholders
- c. **Support** development and implementation of CTP to include defining entry points for resource agencies.
- d. **Take** advantage of existing planning processes and initiatives that are underway such as CTP, workshops, SHC, and long-range corridors planning
- e. **Identify** needed legislative changes
- f. **Develop** and maintain protocols for using a shared GIS in planning
- g. **Interagency** Leadership Team adopts SHC as goal
- h. **Develop** processes and procedures for involving local, state, federal agencies and the private sector in strategic natural, human and cultural enhancement initiatives
- i. **Develop** processes and procedures for involving local, state, federal agencies and the private sector in economic development enhancement initiatives
- j. **Develop** process to integrate transportation planning with NEPA
- k. **Implement** transportation planning and NEPA changes required by SAFETEA-LU
- l. **Support** implementation of the Strategic Highway Corridor initiative

Strategy 3: Develop outreach mechanisms to assist local governments in developing integrated land use and transportation plans.

- a. **Develop** a communication plan for a new and improved comprehensive transportation process - CTP
- b. **Work** with locals on advantages and means of linking land use planning to transportation needs
- c. **Provide** incentives and/or assistance for linking transportation and land-use planning

Strategy 4: Develop better data and tools to evaluate impacts.

- a. **Provide** existing information and assistance on how to use information
- b. **Develop** a shared, comprehensive GIS database (see Goal 1)
- c. **Educate** local governments and planning agencies about existing GIS data layers

Strategy 5: Inform and engage RPO and MPO on Certified Site process.

Goal 3: Improve the Merger 01 Process

Goal Sponsor: John Sullivan (FHWA)

Background:

In response to problems with meeting let schedules for state transportation projects, the NC Department of Transportation, the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the US Army Corps of Engineers created a method for integrating environmental permit review and mitigation processes for transportation projects. Known formally as the Section 404/NEPA Interagency Merger Process, the name was shorted to the Merger 01 Process, reflecting its establishment in 2001. The Merger 01 Process was created to accomplish two objectives: (1) to develop quality permit applications and issue environmental permits that support the timely delivery of the transportation program while minimizing disruption to the natural and human environment; and (2) to improve the work-flow effectiveness and efficiency of permit application development, coordination and issuance process.

The Merger 01 Process is an exemplary program, recognized nationally as an innovative approach to state and federal cooperation in transportation improvement and environmental protection. However, work still needs to be done to realize the promises that such cooperation can deliver. Although teams and work groups have been established under the FHWA/DOT work plan, and appropriate technologies and information exist for training teams and work groups, the Merger 01 process has not received formal approval by all federal and state partners. Moreover, a limited number of agency staff devoted to Merger 01 and lack of prioritization in staff effort have hampered progress of the program. In addition to managerial direction and resources, a staff training plan in Merger 01 processes and procedures and a common language with basic definitions need to be developed and delivered.

Objectives:

1. Maximize the full benefits of the Merger 01 Process.
2. Continuously improve the management of the Merger 01 Process.

Vision:

1. Effectively manage and modify the Merger 01 Process as improvements are identified.
2. A culture of teamwork is fundamental to the Merger 01 Process.
3. Accountability is established through clearly defined roles, responsibilities, method and measurements of effectiveness.
4. Adequate resources are provided for an effective Merger 01 Process.

Goal 3 - Challenges

Circumstances and forces that either directly or indirectly hinders progress toward the goal.

Number of staff is limited and prioritization is not provided

Merger 01 process has not been formally approved

Merger 01 training plan has not been developed

Lack of definitions and common language

Political stakeholders have unrealistic expectations of the improved Merger 01 process

MPOs and **RPOs** are not completely aware of agency planning processes and procedures

Goal 3 - Opportunities

Assets and circumstances that positively influence progress toward the goal.

Technologies and information exist for training teams and work groups

Teams and work groups have been established under the FHWA/DOT work plan

Utilize a statewide transportation process which includes a preliminary TIP used as an early screening tool to improve the Merger 01 process

Utilize the Merger 01 implementation team as a resource for process improvement

The General Assembly Report on transportation program delivery recommends the development of a 2-tiered planning and delivery TIP

DOT is developing a communication plan that can help explain the Comprehensive Transportation Planning Process

The leadership planning process is an educational opportunity for leaders and constituents (Interagency Leadership Team)

NCDOT now using a schedule tool (PMii) to internally communicate the status and schedule of projects

Goal 3 - Strategies/Activities

The approaches you will take to achieve your objectives and that build on opportunities and mitigate challenges.

Strategy 1: Enhance the capacity of staff.

- a. Develop** a staff training program for Merger 01
- b. Use** the Interagency Leadership Team to educate and inform Merger 01 participants
- c. Ensure** Interagency Leadership Team provides training opportunities for Merger 01 participants
- d. Hold** multi-agency, joint training opportunities
- e. Clearly** define roles and responsibilities of staff in the Merger 01 process through the FHWA/DOT work groups
- f. Management** will support a culture of teamwork within the Merger 01 process
- g. Develop** performance measures to chart progress and identify successes
- h. Schedule** periodic Interagency Leadership Team meetings to assess effectiveness of Merger 01 process
- i. Use** facilitators for Merger 01 Team to resolve issues prior to elevating unresolved issues

Strategy 2: Improve awareness of stakeholders.

- a. Inform** the General Assembly's Transportation Oversight Committee about Interagency Leadership Team's initiatives
- b. Educate** the MPO and RPO members about the Merger 01 Process and different federal and state regulatory requirements.
- c. Communicate** on-going improvements and project status to Merger 01 stakeholders

Strategy 3: Effectively manage and modify the Merger 01 process as improvements are identified.

- a. Establish** high level performance measures for Merger 01
- b. Use** NCDOT scheduling tool to develop an internal project status and schedule for senior leadership

Strategy 4: NCDOT will establish schedule for concurrence points and convey to team members at team meetings; project status will also be conveyed.

- a. Information** needed to make decisions at each concurrence point will be identified and provided at concurrence meetings

Strategy 5: Develop the GIS layers for Certified Sites.